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TAGS: [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [IS](#) [QA](#)
SUBJECT: SARI NUSSEIBEH AND NASER AL QIDWA: TIME IS SHORT
TO ACHIEVE PEACE; EXTERNAL INTERVENTION NEEDED

REF: JERUSALEM 201

Classified By: Classified by Consul General Jake Walles for reasons 1.4
(b,d)

11. (C) Summary. In separate meetings with the Consul General, al Quds University President Sari Nusseibeh and former PA Foreign Minister Naser al Qidwa emphasized that time is short to achieve a two-state solution, and the risks of further Palestinian disintegration are high. Both dismissed the Roadmap as an incremental and slow tool, and said the focus on training the PASF has not served PA interests. They said USG intervention is crucial now. Nusseibeh proposed that the USG present a peace deal that "neither side could refuse" and move immediately to the political end game. He also recommended that President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) not engage in a national dialogue or establish a unity government. Al Qidwa, on the other hand, advocated a government of national unity that would fall short of Quartet requirements.

Nusseibeh: USG Must Present a Peace Deal
and Move to the Political End Game Now

12. (C) Al Quds University President Sari Nusseibeh told the Consul General February 3 that the moment is ripe for the USG to propose a peace deal that "neither side can refuse." With Binyamin Netanyahu (the presumptive new Israeli Prime Minister) on one side and Abu Mazen on the other, a deal is only possible if presented from the outside, he said. Nusseibeh dismissed interim steps, including a settlement freeze, early PA elections, the national reconciliation process or Gaza reconstruction, and he urged moving immediately to the political end game. Otherwise, "the whole thing (the PA, Fatah, the PLO) could collapse." Without Fatah, he added, "there will be no chance for a peaceful resolution." He said the parameters of a peace deal are broadly known and could be the plan he and Israeli MK Ami Ayalon developed (the "Ayalon-Nusseibeh Plan").

13. (C) Nusseibeh said a peace deal must be ratified by each side, but through different processes. Israel, he said, is a "sufficiently mature democracy" and should use a referendum. On the Palestinian side, he said, a referendum would be divisive, and PA elections should be the vehicle to approve a deal. He said elections before a deal would be a "disaster," but Abu Mazen and Fatah should go into Presidential and legislative elections campaigning on the proposed deal as their political program. He said this approach would require Abu Mazen to take risks, but he predicted Abu Mazen would be re-elected as President and Fatah would win a majority of PLC seats.

Nusseibeh: Abu Mazen has the Courage;
PM Fayyad is in the "Wrong Context"

¶4. (C) Nusseibeh said he believes Abu Mazen is courageous enough and could withstand the criticism he would face from supporting a US-proposed deal. He noted that Abu Mazen could blunt some criticism by engaging Palestinians (including refugees outside the West Bank and Gaza) and acknowledging concessions that he may need to make for peace. Nusseibeh pointed to Abu Mazen's courage in the 1990s in defense of the Palestinian negotiators and more recently in criticizing the rockets launched by Hamas into southern Israel.

¶5. (C) Asked by the Consul General about PM Fayyad's political standing after Gaza, Nusseibeh said he is a "perfect prime minister," but in the "wrong context" and can never be a "national figure." Fayyad, he said, is perceived as an "agent of the Americans." Nusseibeh criticized the USG emphasis on security in the West Bank, which "doesn't go well from the Palestinian point of view." He said the popular impression is that the PASF do not serve Palestinian interests.

Al Qidwa: External Factors Needed;
Palestinian Institutions Disintegrating

¶6. (C) Former PA FM Naser al Qidwa told the Consul General February 5 that external impetus is required for Palestinians to move out of the current crisis. He said: "on our own, it's too late to do what needs to be done." He asked that the USG: 1) oppose the separation of the West Bank and Gaza; 2) insist on implementation of the 2005 AMA to open the

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crossing; and 3) pressure the GOI on access and movement more generally. At the political level, he urged the USG to "press the time factor" and urge the GOI to stop all settlement activity and define permanent status as a "two state solution based on 1967 borders." Al Qidwa dismissed the value of the Roadmap, saying, "no amount of discussion of check points will impact GOI policy." He pressed for faster, more dramatic progress, saying, "we don't have time," and warning that otherwise "the Palestinian side will disintegrate fully." The emphasis on building the PASF, he said, will not succeed, because it was not based on a national political vision and was seen as contrary to Palestinian interests. "Even in Ramallah, people are suspicious and see the PA security forces act like the IDF," he said.

¶7. (C) Al Qidwa said he is very concerned about Palestinian institutions. "We have almost lost the PLO because of utter stupidity," he said and asked why the PNC was not convened after Hamas' take-over of Gaza. He said he does not expect Fatah to hold the Sixth Party Congress any time soon, adding that, if it does, there are no assurances that the new leadership will be reform-oriented. He said there has been no progress in Fatah reform in the three years since it lost the PLC elections, noting that the regional elections over the last eighteen months were conducted under different rules and did not contribute to institution building. Fatah will have a hard time campaigning on the basis of its program of a negotiated settlement, which has so far failed, he concluded.

Al Qidwa: National Unity Government

¶8. (C) Al Qidwa said Palestinians need a national unity government, but it should be a government with a clear political program, not simply to prepare for elections. (Note: Al Qidwa signed the recent call by prominent Palestinians from across the political spectrum for a national dialogue (reftel). End Note.) This government, he said, must be a part of the international system to succeed, but it cannot "realistically" meet Quartet conditions. He

said the government should meet minimum standards, recognizing Israel and committing not to use violence against civilians.

19. (C) Al Qidwa said he does not believe the Arab states can help Palestinians resolve their internal problems, noting that they have "been filling the vacuum already, but unfortunately not always to our advantage." He described the Arabs' involvement as inconsistent and haphazard and (echoing most Palestinian leaders) said, "For God's sake, do something about the Qataris!"

WALLES